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SUBJECT: Bahrain Guantanamo Media Update: "They promised us Corn Flakes"

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[1547](#). (D): 06 Manama 0117

[11](#). Summary: Bahrain's newest Arabic daily recently completed a six-part series of exclusive interviews with former Guantanamo detainee Adel Kamel Abdulla Al Haji, who was returned from Guantanamo along with two other detainees in November. The exposes have given the greatest space and detail so far to a story that just won't die, rehashing previously heard claims of torture, sexual humiliation, psychological games, desecration of the Quran, and (this is new) most recently an apparent denial of promised corn flakes by American soldiers. What is perhaps most significant about the series is its narrative quality, which casts Americans always as evil conspirators using every tactic at hand to break the spirit of a noble group of resistant detainees. Meanwhile, appearing in the Arabic daily Akhbar Al Khalij and English sister paper Gulf Daily News, a continuing stream of dispatches from the lawyer of current detainee Juma Al-Dossari and two other Bahraini detainees who remain at Guantanamo, have described detainees in failing health, and an apparent 14th suicide attempt by Dossari in January. In contrast to the firestorm of public criticism by government and human rights leaders that followed Dossari's claims last fall, the recent spate of stories since the return of three detainees have generated surprisingly little commentary or discussion. End Summary.

[12](#). Since it first published in November, Al-Watan has positioned itself as a Salafi-bent and highly critical of America's role in the war on terror and its relationship with Bahrain, portraying U.S. support for democracy programs like National Democratic Institute, as meddling and conspiratorial.

[13](#). Similarly, the six-part series on Kamel's odyssey tends to portray the United States Global War on Terror - from the battlefield of Afghanistan to the confines of Guantanamo - as a good versus evil battle, with America's enemies as the heroes. In his story, America uses trickery, sex and firepower against outgunned civilians and holy warriors.

U.S. Air Power "Destroys Entire Villages"

[14](#). In part one, the Muharraq-born Kamel, now 41, leaves his job with the Bahrain Defense Force in October 2001 to travel to Afghanistan via Iran. Apparently moved by the plight of Afghanistan's people, Kamel went for the purpose of "providing humanitarian assistance to victims of these attacks." Although surprisingly vague about his own activities in Afghanistan, Kamel repeats the allegation that he and many other Arabs were haphazardly rounded up by Pakistanis and sold to the Americans for financial reward. He describes entire villages suspected of supporting the Taliban destroyed by U.S. air attacks.

[15](#). Part two is about Kamel's captivity in Kandahar, where he alleges he was tortured by electric shocks and kept in solitary confinement, deprived of food for days and finally transferred to Guantanamo Bay.

Alleged Desecration of the Quran

[16](#). Kamel meticulously describes a campaign of physical and psychological torture under American detention, intended, he says, to "test the bounds of human endurance" and to break down a stubborn and proud group of captives. Kamel repeats previously alleged stories about U.S. soldiers desecrating the Quran, in one instance a soldier asking "Is this your holy book?" before kicking it across the room. After the alleged desecration of the Quran, Kamel says detainees launched a hunger strike, during which they were beaten and force fed by the Americans. Kamel also said soldiers would turn on loud music in an effort to distract detainees during prayer times.

Camp X-Ray: "A Psychological Laboratory Experiment"

[17](#). Kamel also claims that "even medical services were part of the daily torture," that psychologists and other medical

staff collaborated, misdiagnosed health and psychological conditions, and prescribed medication that often made detainees sicker, or left them in a state of decreased mental alertness: "all a strategy to torture us and break us down." Detainees often refused medication, he claimed.

18. At one point, he claims rumors were spread by prison administrators that detainees had attempted suicide, an effort he ascribed to an attempt "to cover themselves in case one died from torture." This is notable and appears an attempt to bolster a bizarre claim made by Dossari's family that an apparent suicide attempt (described by Dossari's lawyer in a December story in the Washington Post) was actually faked to cover an attempt to murder him.

19. Kamel also repeats allegations previously made by Juma Al-Dossari that detainees were offered sex in exchange for cooperation and subjected to female interrogators who stripped during interrogations. Kamel said eventually the Americans gave up in their attempt to break the spirit of the detainees and began to improve conditions and allow them to see attorneys and file complaints.

110. Kamel claims he was more recently interrogated about Bahrain's political situation and asked about his relationship with political societies and whether he had been politically active in Bahrain. This is a new assertion and is an interesting twist in light of Al-Watan's recent slanted-focus on NDI's activities in training political societies in Bahrain. He claims he was shown photos of individuals to comment on, but refused to look at them.

111. Part six, appearing February 7, wraps up with Kamel's return to Bahrain, emotional reunion with his family, and then strangely returns to some "highlights from Camp X-Ray," including an allegation that soldiers threw away or consumed about half of each meal given to detainees, including some of the best parts: the yogurt, toast and eggs, and finally that prison officials at one point promised detainees corn flakes three times a week, but were disappointed when the corn flakes were eaten by soldiers.

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